

Message Text

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SUBJECT: OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HOLD PUBLIC CONGRESS IN
MADRID

SUMMARY: SPAIN'S FIVE ILLEGAL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUPS
HAVE JUST STAGED A THREE DAY CONGRESS IN MADRID, AMIN MUCH
PUBLICITY (EVEN ON GOVT-OWNED TELEVISION), AND WITH COMPLETE
TOLERANCE OF THE GOVT. END SUMMARY

1. FROM JAN 30-FEB 1 FIVE ILLEGAL SPANISH CHRISTIANS DEMOCRATIC
PARTIES, I.E. IZQUIERDA DEMOCRATICA CRISTIANA (IDC).
FEDERACION POPULAR DEMOCRATICA (FPD), PARTIDO NACIONALISTA VASCO
(PNV), UNION DEMOCRATICA DE CATALUNA (UDC) AND UNION
DEMOCRATICA DEL PAIS VALENCIANO (UDPV), WHICH CONSTITUTE
THE EQUIPO DEMOCRATA CRISTIANO DEL ESTADO ESPANOL IN THE INTER-
NATIONAL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION, HELD THREE SO-CALLED
"DAYS OF STUDY" AT A DOWNTOWN MADRID THEATRE. THESE "DAYS OF STUDY"
AMOUNTED TO A FULL FLEDGED CONGRESS OF THE FIVE ILLEGAL PARTIES,
THE FIRST OF ITS TYPE IN POST FRANCO SPAIN. REPS FROM
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IN ITALY, WEST GERMANY,
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BELGIUM, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS, AUSTRIA, AND VENEZUELA

AS WELL AS FROM INTERNAIONAL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS AND DIPLOMATS FROM VARIOUS EMBASSIES IN MADRID ALSO ATTENDED. OPPOSITION SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT THE FRAG VISITORS WERE CAREFUL NOT TO APPEAR WHOLLY COMMITTED TO THE FIVE CD MEMBERS OF THE "EQUIPO" AND ARRANGED TO MEET SEPARATELY WITH OTHERS CDS, E.G. SILVA MUNOZ' GROUP AND "TACITO", IN A DISCREET EFFORT TO NUDGE CD GROUPS TOWARD COALITION.

2. SEVERAL CHRISTIANS DEMOCRATS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING HAVE BRIEFED THE EMBASSY. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE- A MAJOR PUBLIC SHOW OF CD IMPORTANCE- WAS ACHIEVED. MUCH LESS WAS ACCOMPLISHED AT THE PRACTICAL POLITICAL LEVEL. THE TWO GREATEST OBSTACLES WERE (A) THE INTRAN- SIENT ATTITUDES OF THE MAJOR SPOKESMEN, RUIZ GIMENEZ AND GIL ROBLES, IN FAVOR OF LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNISTS AND AGAINST COLLABORATION WITH THE CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS OF SILVA MUNOZ, AND (B) THE ADAMANT POSITIONS OF THE BASQUES AND CATALANS IN IN INSISTING ON "NATIONALIST AUTONOMY". SOME CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ARE DISCOURAGED WITH THE LACK OF REALISM (ANOTHER EXAMPLE WAS THE CALL FOR PROPOR- TIONAL REPRESENTATION, A RECIPE FOR PARTY PROLIFERATION) AND THE TAKING OF POSITIONS THAT RUN COUNTER TO THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS UPON WHICH A SUCCESSFUL CD MOVEMENT WOULD HAVE TO REST.

3. AT THE END OF THE MEETING A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED CALLING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN VIA A CONSTITUENT PROCESS, AND APPEALING TO THE GOVT TO IMMEDIATELY ABOLISH ALL LAWS AND DECREES WHICH LIMIT FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN, POLITICAL, OR TRADE UNION RIGHTS. TWO THEMES APPEARED TO DOMINATE THE CONGRESS' SESSIONS: (A) THAT OF AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS AND RETURN OF ALL EXILES, AND (B) QUESTION OF SUTONOMY FOR DIFFERENT REGIONS AND SOME FORM OF FEDERAL STRUCTURE FOR SPAIN (LATTER IS NOT SURPRISING INASMUCH AS THREE OF THESE SPANISH THEMES WERE RECURRENT REFERENCES TO " DEMOCRATIC RUPTURE", REJECTION OF GOVT'S MEASURES AND ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR LIBERALIZATION AND REFORM AS GROSSLY INSUFFICIENT, AND A REJECTION OF THOSE GROUPS IN REGIME (AIMED PRIMARILY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT SILVA MUNOZ'S UDE) WHOCH SEEK TO USE "CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC" LABEL.

4. IN ORGANIZING THEIR MEETING, THE CHRISTIANS DEMOCRATS INFORMED THE GOVT OF THEIR INTENTION TO HOLD IT IN CONFORMITY WITH A LAW OF EIGHTEEN EIGHTY. TWO DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING ARIAS, IN HIS PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT, PROMISED TO USE THE 1880 LAW AS A BASIS FOR WIDENING THE

OBSERVANCE OF FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR MERELY INFORMED THE ORGANIZERS THAT A GOVT REP WOULD ATTEND THE SESSIONS, IMPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR RIGHT TO HOLD SUCH A MEETING. ACCORDING TO A WELL INFORMED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT, THE EPISODE ILLUSTRATES THE POSSIBILITY OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVT AND THE OPPOSITION ALTHOUGH HE FEELS THAT THERE IS A LONG ROAD TO TRAVEL.

5. THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING WERE GIVEN WIDE MEDIA COVERAGE INCLUDING A SPOT ON GOVT RUN TV AND A BRIEF INTERVIEW WITH JOSE MARIA GIL ROBLES, LEADER OF THE FPD AND FORMER MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC. ACCORDING TO A "TACITO" MEMBER, THIS UPRECEDENTED GOVT MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE OPPOSITION OCCURED BECAUSE OF "TACITO" MEMBERS NOW IN KEY POSITIONS IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND TOURISM.

6. COMMENT: A PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE "EQUIPO" WAS HELD CLANDESTINELY IN VALENCIA IN MAY 1975, GOVT TACIT APPROVAL OF THE LATEST MEETING AND THE SCOPE OF MEDIA COVERAGE ILLUSTRATE THE CHNGE OF ATMOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES TO HOLD FREE ASSEMBLIES. EARLIER THE GOVT ALLOWED THE SPANISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PSDE) TO HOLD A MUCH SMALLER AND LESS PUBLICIZED MEETING IN MADRID IN MID-JANUARY. POLITICAL PARTIES ARE FOLLOWING THE LEAD OF THE MEDIA IN TESTING THE TOLERANCE OF THE NEW GOVT, BUT THESE CHANGES WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO BE REFLECTED IN REVISED LEGISTLATION AND REGULATIONS.
EATON

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